THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) External Affairs Minister has not made any official visit to France during this year.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Extradition Treaties

3418. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the countries with whom India has signed extradition treaties, so far; and

(b) to countries with whom the extradition treaties are likely to be signed during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) India has signed extradition treaties with 16 countries (Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan).

(b) Extradition treaties with Germany and Turkey have been signed during the current financial year. The texts of the extradition treaties with Philippines, Poland and Spain have been initialled at the official level, but the treaties can be signed only after the Contracting States in each case complete the requisite process of obtaining internal approvals.

Missing of Bengali Chef from British Ship

3419.SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Indian chef, 27, falls of QE 2, search abandoned" which appeared in 'The Asian Age' dated the 25th July, 2001 (Kolkata Edition) and news-item captioned "Bengali chef missing from British ship" appearing in the Times of India dated the 28th July, 2001 (Kolkata Edition),

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government have taken any action to probe the matter through Indian Embassy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Shri Prabir Ghoshal, a crew member of the ocean liner QE2 reportedly went missing on July 23, 2001. The High Commission of India, London sought a full report on the incident from the British Maritime and Coast Guard Agency which informed that they had undertaken a search and rescue operation. However, the search had to be called off after a reasonable amount of time had lapsed and the authorities are now awaiting information on the sighting/ location of the body of late Shri Prabir Ghoshal prior to concluding the death enquiry.

Relationship between Gujarat and New Jersey (USA)

3420. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from the Government of Gujarat for clearance of Sister State Relationship between Gujarat and New Jersey USA in the areas of Economic Development, Scientific Research, Tourism and Culture;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Opening of UAE Consulate in Southern India

3421. SHRI P.N. SIVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request has been made to the Government of UAE to open its Consulate in Southern India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and